

PHOBIAS ABOUT "RUSSOPHOBIA"

By WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

(The New Leader, April 14, 1944)

When a Communist or fellow traveler is getting the worst of an arguments his first impulse is to scream "Fascist" at his opponent. There is also a subtler method of substituting abuse for argument. This is to shout "Russophobe," "anti-Russian," when a criticism of some Soviet policy or action is voiced, even though the criticism is buttressed with evidence calculated to convince the most sceptical mind, even if it is based on Soviet official statements.

This phobia about "anti-Russianism" is especially congenial to a class of persons whom Max Eastman has described as mushheads. They would quite sincerely repudiate the charge of being sympathetic with Communism. Occasionally they may even subject Stalin and his American fifth column to some ever-so-mild chiding just to prove their independence. But they have been so long accustomed to maintaining a double standard of morals, an extremely mild one for the Soviet Union, a harsh and exacting one for the rest of the world, that they have become constitutionally incapable of feeling strong indignation about anything that happens in Stalin's realm. Ugly things that they would not hesitate to call by ugly names if they occurred anywhere else, slave labor on a gigantic scale, executions without trial, annexations in defiance of explicit treaty obligations, the manipulation of puppet regimes, are either not mentioned or euphemistically disposed of as "security measures," prompted and largely excused by the supposed nefarious designs of Russia's neighbors.

I am not interested in the standard gramophone record falsifications of Communist and fellow-travelers. They are secular Holy Rollers, completely impervious to any considerations of logic, truth and justice. And the mushheads are also, in most cases, beyond intellectual redemption.

However, now and then a sincere but confused voice is raised, suggesting that criticisms of Soviet actions and policies are mistaken and out of place, even if they are founded in fact, that such criticisms will "sow suspicion" among the Allies, pave the way of war between America and Russia, etc. These voices deserve an answer.

What state of mind could fairly be described as "anti-Russian"? I would say that this epithet could reasonably be applied to anyone who adopted toward Russians the attitude of Nazis toward Jews, of some reactionary racist Americans toward Negroes or Japanese, of Kiplingish British imperialists toward "natives." But to scent "Russophobia" in every criticism of acts and policies for which the enormous majority of the Russian people bear no responsibility is to fall into absurd contradictions.

I recently attended a forum where a Pole was presenting his country's case against the decisions of the Munich spelled Yalta. He read a strong condemnation of the conduct of Russian troops in suppressing Polish insurrections in 1830 and 1863 and added:

"This was not written by a chauvinistic Pole. It was written by one of Russia's, and the world's greatest, authors, Leo Tolstoy."

This was only one of many of Tolstoy's scathing denunciations of iniquitous acts of the Tsarist regime, at home and abroad. Was Tolstoy, one of the most indigenous of Russian geniuses, therefore a "Russophobe"? To ask the question is to expose its essential silliness.

And to the name of Tolstoy one may add those of Herzen, Kropotkin, Belinsky, Mikhailovsky, Plekhanov.

These men are among the greatest glories of Russian thought, of Russian humanistic culture. All of them were outspoken in their denunciations of wrong and injustice in Russia, not, certainly, because they hated their country, but because they wanted to make it better.

Turn for a moment from Russia to the United States. Abraham Lincoln condemned in the strongest terms the war against Mexico in 1846. Did he show himself a bad American? The fiery abolitionist orator, Wendell Phillips, used some very strong language about the American Constitution, because it legalized slavery. If I remember accurately, he called the Constitution a league with death and a covenant with hell. This shocked many people at the time. But in retrospect we do not think badly of Americans who overstepped the bounds of polite phraseology on behalf of human liberty.

The idea that criticism of Soviet action or refusal to recommend unconditional compliance with Stalin's will on every disputed point is equivalent to a desire to go to war with Russia is as appeasement in its most obvious and ugliest form. It is also absurdity.

Suppose that a liberal-minded Englishman or Frenchman, after visiting the United States before the Civil War, had noted the existence of human slavery as a blot on the ideals of the young republic. Could such a critic have been fairly charged with inciting his country to go to war with the United States?

It is in a policy of unlimited appeasement that the greatest ultimate danger of war between the United States and the Soviet Union may be found. Take, for instance, the question of Poland. Obviously relations between the United States and the Soviet Union will be better if an honestly democratic regime is set up in a genuinely independent Poland. They will be worse if a puppet regime, installed by force and fraud, tyrannizes over Polish people.

But the way toward the establishment of an independent Poland is certainly not to condone through silence the Soviet reign of terror in that unhappy country. What is needed is thoroughgoing exposure and widespread denunciation of this feign of terror, in Congress, in protest meetings, leading up to strong diplomatic action by our Government.

No peace will grow from the soil of appeasement. And Americans who wish to see friendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the only possible long-term basis, a basis of equality and mutual respect for the pledged word, will be well advised to banish the expressions, Russophobe, anti-Russian, pro-Russian, Russophile, from their thinking and regard every piece of news or interpretation concerned with the Soviet Union solely on the basis of its truth.

★

SANCTA SIMPLICITAS DEPARTMENT

"The Soviets base their prosecution (of German war criminals) on the Hague and Geneva conventions, which protect civilian populations and the property of occupied countries."

One wonder what would have been the effect if some of the hundreds of thousands of members of the "civilian populations" of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, subjected to deportation and loss of all their property by the arbitrary action of the NKVD, had appealed to the Hague and Geneva conventions for protection. There is only one more ironically amusing spectacle than a lawless dictatorship solemnly invoking international seriously.

LET'S UNDERLINE...

By ŠARUNAS

If the world permits the big fellows to push the little ones around it will be half slave and half free, and Lincoln said we can't exist that way. The little fellows will be full of resentment, and the big ones full of fear. There will be no security for anybody. The world will be filled with wars and rumors of wars.

That's why all who believe the American political conception of equality before just laws is the best principle for an international order, take a strong stand for giving a square deal to the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians. These unhappy Baltic people lately neither got, or are getting anything like a square deal.

The Lithuanian are a very small part (3 million, pre-war count) of the hundred million sturdy East European peasants divided into the small nations of Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Croats, Serbs, Slovenians, Austrians, Albanians and Greeks. Sandwiched historically between the Germans and Russians these small nations in times past suffered, and are now suffering all the tragic consequences of having their problems forcefully solved by the big fellows. Their only hope lies in the American way of equality before the law which gives the little fellow his day in court.

A neutral observer, Bernard Newman, who had no axe to grind, in his book "The New Europe", says this about the Baltic States before the Russian occupation of 1940: "Here were three countries, which in spite of difficulties provided a considerable degree of prosperity and happiness to their people. They threatened no one and only desired to live in peace." (p. 204.)

That's the fundamental desire of every little man (for that matter, the big fellow, too): "to live in peace." Peace on earth to all men of goodwill.

Viltis believes this peace can be achieved only on the basis of the American way which is essentially a way of good will. We think the treatment accorded to nations who have proved the desire and ability to live free (as Lithuania did) will show whether the world is drifting—toward peace or toward war. That's why we stand up for Lithuania, not because many of us are Lithuanians but because all of us are Americans, and we don't want another war!

DO YOU WANT ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS CARDS?

Our recently discharged friend and fellow VILTITE, John Morgan, has designed in wood block a group of Christmas cards. One portrays a shepherd over the hills of Judea, another depicts the dove of peace in flight, and the third is similar to the picture of the flag raising by the Marines over Mt. Uribachi on Iwo Jima. In the last, the figures are of various races of people raising the flag that will establish peace on earth and good will among men. They may be ordered from John Morgan, 2604 Swarts St., Chester, Pa.

12 for \$1.00, or 100 for \$7.00.

Hope V I L T I S Hope

The Friendly Paper For Friends

Subscription per year\$2.00

3 Subscriptions \$5.00



FINNY'S - FUNNIES

He—"Please!"
She—"No!"
He—"Just this once!"
She—"No! I said."
He—"Aw ma! All the rest of the kids are going barefoot!"

The new minister was talking to the oldest inhabitant. Said the aged one; "I'll be 97 years old, sir, and I haven't an enemy in the world."

"That is a beautiful thought," said the clergyman approvingly.

"Yes, sir," was the answer. "I'm thankful to say I've outlived them all."

Two morons were catching fish galore. Said one moron to the other. "Let's come back here tomorrow and catch more fish."

"But how will we know that we will be in the same spot?" asked the other.

We'll mark the bottom of our boat with a cross to indicate where we caught the fish."

"How will we know that we will get the same boat?" asked again the first moron.

Two ghosts were playing poker when a knock came at the door. "Who is it?" they asked.

"Rigor Mortis—may I set in?"

Teacher: "Johnny, can you define nonsense?"

Johnny: "Yes, teacher. An elephant hanging over a cliff with its tail tied to a daisy."

Prosecutor: "Now tell the court how you came to take the car."

Defendant: "Well, the car was parked in front of the cemetery, so naturally I thought the owners was dead."

Nurse: "Oh ma'am, what shall I do? The twins have fallen down the well."

Mother: "Dear me! Go into the library and get the last number of Parents' Magazine. It contains an article on 'How to Bring Up Children'."

Gal: "Father, can my new boy friend replace your business partner who died this morning?"

Dad: "It's all right with me—if you can arrange it with the undertaker."

It takes two to make a marriage—a single girl and an anxious mother.

"I regret to inform you that your wife's mind is completely gone."

"I'm not surprised, Doc. She's been giving me a piece of it every day for twenty years."

May God Grant You A Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year

VYTS - FIN